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shoal, and in three places are shoal patches with only 3 fathoms ; but these can be seen from the mast-head. A surf upon the beach, which is very steep too, makes it inconvenient embarking a cargo like rice, that requires to be kept dry.

We arrived fortunately just in time to be present at a grand feast, given by Mr. King to the rajah and family, and about two thousand of the head men of the place. The feast commenced at 10 A.M., and continued till sun-set ; and though every man came armed with his creese there was not the least disturbance. Dancing girls and boys, with a very comic tragedy, occupied the time not employed in eating and drinking : the whole scene was very amusing. The wife of the captain of an English merchant ship attracted universal admiration and surprise ; her dress, ornaments, &c. were viewed with great curiosity by all the chiefs, and even by the queen, who is mother to the present rajah, and appears to take a decided lead in politics. I could go on at more length, but I find myself crossing, which warns me to bring this long yarn to an end. When we do return home, should we ever have that good luck, I shall be able to give you the whole detail of our cruize, both with pen and pencil, which latter, I can assure you, has not been idle, for I have a sketch, of some sort, of everything we have seen that would bear drawing.

IV.—*Tussac Grass.* By Sir W. J. HOOKER.

[A REPORT on the Falkland Islands by Governor Moody has just been printed by order of the House of Commons. Appended to it is a botanical description of the extraordinary tussac grass of those islands. An extract from the governor's report was communicated to the Society in the course of the present season. The following letter from Sir W. J. Hooker, addressed to the chairman of the evening on which the report was read, is interesting, as it communicates the information that the name *Tussac* appears to have been applied indiscriminately to several other kinds of grasses, and conveys a picturesque idea of the appearance of the plant to which the name will in future be restricted by botanists. It is also pleasing to learn that the son of one who stands so high in natural science as Sir William Hooker is devoting himself to botany, with all the zeal of his father, and the self-diffidence characteristic of real talent.]

You will perhaps not deem it unworthy the attention of the Society, that I should offer a little information on the subject of this extraordinary production of the Falklands, which probably, through the exertions of Lieutenant Moody, may ere long form

an important pasture on some of the otherwise barren coasts of England, and especially on those of Scotland and Ireland.

The following is an extract from the first letter I received from my son, Dr. Joseph Hooker, dated "Berkeley Sound, Falkland Islands, May 3rd, 1842."

"This place is better for botany than I had at first expected, every day adding something new to my collections.

"The governor, Lieutenant Moody, is much interested about the *Tussac Grass* (a species of *Carex*? or *Sedge*?); and as he is preparing to send home a very extensive report of these islands, he has requested me to draw up a description of the plant. This I did in great haste, when on the point of starting with the cattle party to explore the interior: and as all the specimens that were forwarded to me for examination were imperfect and not in flower, so I cannot help apprehending that my description (which was enclosed in the Governor's report to Lord Stanley) may prove far from correct. Should you be able to get a sight of it, I should feel greatly obliged by your looking it over and seeing if it is intelligible. By the next opportunity I hope to send a fuller account of this *grass*, which Governor Moody much wishes to lay before the *Linnæan Society*. It is assuredly a most remarkable plant."

Now, this "*sedge* or *carex*" being thus doubtfully considered by my son as *Tussac grass*, I felt assured there was some error in the matter. All voyagers had spoken of this grass as constituting the best possible fodder for cattle, in short, as being what rendered the Falklands of such immense consequence for rearing the vast herds which abound in those islands; and from the hesitation with which my son spoke of the correctness of his report, I felt assured that, having arrived at the Falklands in winter, when plants are not in flower, some other grass, the dried specimens of some tufted *sedge* or *carex* (a grass-like plant, but very unsuited to cattle), had, by mistake, been put into his hands. I therefore wrote to the Colonial Office, begging that Lord Stanley would do me the favour to send me a copy of my son's report, and that he would not allow any use to be made of the report itself till I should be enabled to confirm its accuracy, or till further information could be afforded. This report I found to contain an accurate description of a large and beautiful and very little known *carex*, the *carex trifida* of *Cavanilles*. My son's subsequent letter, dated "Falkland Islands, May 26th," satisfactorily explains the mistake:—

"Since writing to you last, which I did about three weeks ago by the 'Arrow,' I have accompanied the governor in a most pleasant excursion to Port William. His immediate object was to look at the proposed site of a new town nearer to the sea than Port Louis is, at the head of this long harbour. We went down in a brig, the 'Alarm,' from

Guernsey, which has been here for some time, and we lived on board her a week, making short excursions into the surrounding country. Like other parts of these islands, the ground we traversed is quite bare of trees, and the whole surface covered with peat-bogs or grass lands, affording excellent fodder to the herds of wild cattle and troops of horses. Near the coast a very fine grass grows in prodigious abundance, called *Tussac*, and a perfectly different plant it is from that of which I drew up a description two or three weeks ago at the Governor's desire, but which is also very common here and called Tussac too. The true *Tussac* constitutes quite an extraordinary feature in the landscape, covering immense tracts, particularly where the soil is sandy. Round its roots it forms immense balls, which stick up 5 to 6 feet above the ground, and are often as much in diameter; on the top of these the *Tussac* throws up its stems, and long leaves, which hang down all round, and are often 6 or 7 feet in length. These heaps grow within a few feet of each other, leaving spaces generally bare of vegetation between them; so that in walking among them you are hidden from view, and the whole tussac patch forms a perfect labyrinth.

"Upon the whole I have got many more plants in this island than I had expected, especially at this late season of the year. Winter has now set in, fairly in earnest, the whole ground being covered with snow; and frosts very common, though not strong enough to afford any skating. Collecting botanical specimens here, *sea-weeds* especially, is no sinecure; the days are so short, and the nights so long, and the weather generally so stormy and wet, as to render the tent a very uncomfortable berth. At San Salvador's Bay we had to floor it with gravel for a bed, under which the water drained; and there we lay down in a blanket bag, which is a blanket sewed up on three sides; you crawl in, feet foremost of course, and pull the mouth of the bag over your head. My bed, when out of the ship, always consists of the plaid my mother gave me, and either a blanket-bag or a rug of opossum skins, wrapped in which I can sleep very comfortably in the open air.

"I do not know if ———, during her stay in Jersey, ever met with Lieut.-Colonel Moody of Guernsey, who is father of the present Governor of the Falkland Islands. This gentleman is a particular friend of mine, and has been most kind to me, his house being open to me at all hours, and his library quite at my service."

This account of *two kinds of tussac* (and probably there are half a dozen grasses so called, for I apprehend the name *tussac* or *tussuck*, as Johnson spells it, is merely given from its very tufted mode of growth) is confirmed by a very recent communication from Lieutenant Robinson, R. N., from whom, through the kindness of the Admiralty, I had the pleasure to receive two days ago a box marked "Seeds, &c. from the Falkland Islands." On opening the lid of the box, the first object which presented itself to me was a fine tuft of leaves, more than 6 feet long, of the real *tussac grass*, and so labelled by Lieutenant Robinson; the next thing was a paper containing flowering spikes of the same grass, showing it to be a kind of *Fescue Grass* (*Festuca*): and thirdly there was a paper with the noble spikes of a *Sedge* or

Carex, marked by Lieutenant Moody, "Another kind of *Tussac Grass*, common in the Falkland Islands:" this is the *Carex trifida*, above noticed.

The real *Tussac Grass* is the *Festuca flabellata* of D'Urville: and to its extraordinary productiveness, highly succulent and saccharine nature, I believe all voyagers who have visited the Falklands have borne witness. But on this head no accounts are so worthy to be depended upon as those of the present Governor.

I need not say that I have used my best endeavours to have this valuable grass introduced alive to this country. Lieutenant Robinson has sent old flowering spikes, under the idea, so naturally to be entertained, that they contained seeds: but they are all abortive. It is highly probable, that with a plant, increasing so much by the roots, and in such an unfavourable climate as the Falklands for ripening the seeds of plants, the *tussac grass* can only be transmitted, with any chance of success, by taking up the roots and enclosing them in one of Ward's admirable cases, some of which I have already sent to the Islands for that express purpose.

V.—DANAKIL TRIBES.

[The following statistical review of the distribution of the Danakil Tribes is one of a number of supplementary papers forwarded by Captain Harris, along with the report of the Mission's route to Schwá. It is a contribution not devoid of interest to political geography.]

THE tribe and authority of the Sultan of Tagura extend from Mursa Dooan to the Salt Lake. From the Salt Lake to Rumadali is the territory of Loheita Ibn Ibrahim, Agil of the Roheitas, who are also called Debenik. From Rumadali to Suggagidan is the territory of Ibrahim Ibn Hameido, Agil of the Eya Somaui (Wuhima). From Suggagidan to Warnulli is the territory of Wyess Ibn Hugaio, Agil of the Wuhima. From Wanimilli to Murow belongs to the tribe of Debenik, who have two chiefs, Bedr and Abu Keri Ibn Sumbul. From Murow to How, Sheih Omar Buttú of the tribe of Tughael. From How to Ferri there is a mixed population from all the tribes, but principally the Abdalli, under the authority of the Walama Mahomed, under the King of Shwá. These tribes in time of war, or when called out to repel the attacks of either the Eesa or Mudnitas, their neighbours to the S.E. and N.W., assemble together under the title of Debenik Wuhima. The road lies through these tribes from Tajurra to Abyssinia, bounded on the N.W. by the Mudnitas, on the S.E. by the Eesa Somaui as far as Killullu, and from thence by the sub-tribes of the Gulla.